Mr. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar :—" With reference to the answer to clause (c), may I ask the hon. Minister to state the grounds which influenced the Government to come to the decision and to place the Government Order on the table ? "

The hon. Dr. P. Subbarayan :—" Notice."

Election of a councillor to Ward No. II of the Chidambaram Municipality.

* 1131-F Q.—Mr. V. I. Muniswami Pillai : Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

(a) whether it is a fact that the election of a municipal councillor from Ward No. II of the Chidambaram Municipality did not take place before 1st November 1928 ;

(b) whether any date was fixed for polling to elect a councillor from Ward No. II ; and

(c) if the answer to (a) is in the negative under what circumstances the election did not take place on the date fixed and what steps the Government have taken in this connexion ?

A.—(a) & (b). Yes.

(c) The poll for the second ward was not held on the date originally fixed as the polling officer took ill and could not be present. The Government issued instructions to the Vice-Chairman to complete the election at a very early date. The poll was actually held on 22nd November 1928 but as even this election was found to be invalid it has been set aside and a fresh election ordered.

Village Panchayats

Amendment of the Village Panchayats Act, 1920.

* 1132 Q.—Mr. D. Narayana Raju : Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce a Bill to amend the Village Panchayats Act, 1920 ; and if so, what its main provisions are and when it will be introduced in the Council ; and

(b) whether Government have considered the advisability of conferring judicial functions on panchayats constituted under the Act ?

A.—(a) The draft of the Bill is under scrutiny. Its provisions have not yet been settled. It will be introduced in the Council as early as practicable.

(b) Yes.

Mr. D. Narayana Raju :—" May I know when the draft Bill was ready and how long has it been under consideration ? "

The hon. Dr. P. Subbarayan :—" The draft Bill was ready about two months ago It has been under scrutiny since then. The conference that met on the Local Boards Bill suggested that village panchayats should be the first unit in local self-government and that this principle ought to be incorporated in the Local Boards Bill."

Mr. A. Kaleswara Rao :—" May I know whether the conclusions of the conference will be put forward in the form of a Bill before this House ? "

29th January 1929]

The hon. Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN :—" As I said before, the conclusions of the conference are being considered and a Bill is being drafted on those lines."

Mr. A. KALESWARA RAO :—" Will the draft be ready before the lifetime of this Council ? "

The hon. Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN :—" I think the draft may be ready by the end of March."

Mr. R. NAGAN GOWDA :—" In view of the growth of village panchayats, is it proposed to increase the staff of the Registrar-General of Panchayats ? "

The hon. Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN :—" There is no such proposal at present."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—" May I ask the hon. Minister to say what is the life time of this Council ? "

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" That question does not arise out of the answer on paper."

Transfer of village panchayats to the control of Revenue authorities.

*1133 Q.—Mr. D. NARAYANA RAJU : Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that some village panchayats are being transferred to the control of the District Revenue authorities and if so, what the necessity for such transfer is ; and

(*b*) whether Government have received complaints that the proposed transfer of control to the District Revenue authorities has been a source of great dissatisfaction and discouragement to the panchayats concerned ?

A.—(*a*) Yes ; for the reasons explained in G.O. No. 1969, L. & M., dated 3rd May 1928, a copy [a] of which is laid on the table.

(*b*) The Government have received only a single complaint to this effect.

Mr. D. NARAYANA RAJU :—" With reference to clause (*b*), may I know if the opinions of the Honorary Organizers in the district concerned have been ascertained with regard to the transfer of the village panchayats to the Revenue authorities ? "

The hon. Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN :—" No, Sir."

Mr. D. NARAYANA RAJU :—" May I know if the Government propose to ascertain the wishes and views of Honorary Organizers in this matter ? "

The hon. Dr P. SUBBARAYAN :—" No, Sir. Government have already taken action on this. They think that a certain amount of decentralization is necessary and I do not think any useful purpose will be served by getting any other information."

Mr. D. NARAYANA RAJU :—" May I know if the Government are aware that the control by the ' District Collector ' virtually means the control by a clerk in his office or the Revenue Inspector, and therefore respectable people are unwilling to serve on the village panchayats under such conditions ? "

The hon. Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN :—" I am sorry the hon. Member thinks so, but I think Collectors take their duties more seriously than what the hon. Member suggests."

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[a] Printed as Appendix XI on pages 305-307 infra.